

Appleby Archaeology Group

Notes of the Annual General Meeting of the Appleby Archaeology Group which took place on Thursday January 12th 2017 in the Supper Room, Market Hall, Appleby at 7.00pm.

Present

Committee members: 6

Members of the group: 18

Phyllis Rouston
Mike Godfrey
Martin Joyce
Carol Dougherty

Chairman
Treasurer

Martin Railton
Richard Stevens

Fieldwork/Research
Secretary

Apologies for Absence

Heather Edwards (Membership Secretary), Linda Davis, Margaret Albon, Rosina Mansfield, Stephen Walker, Mick Yates, Trish Shaw, Phillipa Turnbull, Richard McGregor

Minutes of the last AGM held on 13/01/2016

The minutes had been circulated to all members with the winter Newsletter. There being no errors identified, the minutes were approved by the meeting.

1/2017 Matters arising from the notes

7/2016: The Editor of the newsletter was now David Boote. The Chairman explained that the previous two newsletters had been edited and produced by David and she said that she was delighted that the high standards set by Martin Joyce were being maintained by David.

2/2017 Chairman's Report

Phyl Rouston began by saying that as her tenure as chairman comes to a conclusion she thought it appropriate to review the last five years and to say thank you. In 2012 when she was elected chairman, she had said that her aim, with the help of the membership, was to continue to provide an interesting and informative lecture programme and enjoyable summer events and also that she saw research activities as very important.

She continued by saying that over the last five years the group has enjoyed interesting and informative talks, on all aspects of archaeology and that she would like to thank members of the committee for their contributions to finding speakers – with a particular thank you to Carol who often came up with the unexpected. More members have joined in the summer outings which she hoped indicated that the committee had been on the right lines.

The emphasis had however turned to research. The Group had held a number of workshops, the first being fieldwalking in 2013 and during the following three years, several fields were walked. A number finds workshops had been held, the most recent being in October 2016. At these, members have been guided by professionals in the cleaning and identification of finds and Phyl said that she would like to thank Barbara Blenkinsip for collating that information. Phyl went on to say that the most recent palaeography workshops had been organised by Carol Dougherty and had been very successful.

She recalled that the Group had, together with the Altogether Archaeology Project, excavated a Bronze Age barrow on Brackenber Moor. By 2014 funding had become scarce and so by spring 2015 Martin Railton had written an article for the newsletter outlining his ideas for a project. This had eventually become the Dig Appleby Project. The project, at that stage without a name, had been introduced to members at a meeting in June 2015. During 2015, the Group continued to field

walk and two geophysical surveys were undertaken. The first, at the Appleby playing fields found no significant archaeology but the second, in fields at Castrigg on the outskirts of the town, had been more productive. Crop marks had suggested that this was the site of a Roman fortlet and/or signal station but following the survey, Martin now believed that these earthworks were in fact of Iron Age or Romano-British date. So, for the second time, the Group have provided proof that what appear to be Roman signal stations are not always so.

Phyl went on to say that the following months were taken up with detailed planning of the project, applying for funding and seeking sponsors and she wished to thank Martin Railton for the inspiration and driving force behind the project and Richard for all the work he had put in on the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Following the successful grant application, Appleby Archaeology launched Dig Appleby to the town in June 2016 and a very active few months had followed.

In the wider context, she wanted to thank Martin Joyce for all the work he had done. Through his efforts, the newsletter had been digitised and the majority of members had selected that format for delivery. The Group also now had a digitised archive of all the newsletters. She said that Martin had also simplified administration by use of digital records and enhanced our public profile through the website and a Dig Appleby Project Blog. Phyl said that she also wanted to thank Mike as treasurer and Heather as membership secretary for their diligent work during her Chairmanship.

Phyl concluded by thanking the members for their support and friendship not only during the last 5 years but also in the preceding eighteen when she had been the Group's secretary - she promised that she would now try to take a backseat!

3/2017 Secretary's Report

The secretary said that 2016 had been a successful and stable period for the group, membership numbers were about the same as last year, all the talks were well attended as were the summer visits. Happily, the Group were back in the supper room which is a venue that he believed everyone likes and he hoped that the Group would be able to stay here permanently, having changed the meeting day to Thursday.

He reminded the members of the speakers welcomed by the Group in 2016: The year started with Phyl giving us a guided tour of the Copper Mines on the great Orme, followed by Jamie Quartermaine from Oxford Archaeology North explaining the relationship between Roman occupiers and native Britons. Then in March, David Johnston from Ingleton had given the Group a very comprehensive look at lime burning in Westmorland and finally, Fiona Edmonds had provided an insight into the lives of the inhabitants of Furness Abbey and their relationship with their daughter houses. More recently, the Group had heard Caron Newman explaining how the landscape of Cumbria had developed during the medieval period, Marta Alberti from the Vindolanda Trust, heroically giving the Group 7 years of progress since our previous talk on the site in 60 minutes. Last month the Group had heard from Richard Newman on the subject of the Botchergate Roman cemetery, just a year after originally scheduled.

He said that there were still some great talks to come in 2017.

He went on to say that the summer visits to the lime kilns at Smardale and the tour of old Brough had been extremely well received by all who had attended. 2016 had seen the Group begin their Lottery Funded Project – Dig Appleby - about which we would be getting a progress report following the AGM.

The secretary said that, as usual, Committee meetings have been held 4 times a year. Reports of most of the talks have appeared in the newsletter and Cumberland and Westmorland Herald. Coverage in the Herald had been particularly good, with many a centre page splash. He also

said that he tried to keep members up to date with items of interest by email.

He said that the newsletter is still of the highest quality for a Group of this size and of course there was a new editor – David Boote. He thanked David on behalf of the entire membership for a smooth transition and for maintaining the high standard we're used to.

Martin Joyce had been looking after the website and also maintained the Dig Appleby Blog – he hoped that the members had been looking regularly at that as the project has progressed.

The Group Facebook page had also benefitted from the Dig Appleby Project with over 100 followers currently and remarkably the maximum number of people viewing in a single week had been over 1500 – he thought that this was clearly the way to raise the Group's profile. He said that he would have liked more young people to have joined the Group through Facebook and through the Blog but that we were yet to see any major impact, which was a pity. He repeated his message from the 206 AGM that is that the Group is the members and when there are no new members, particularly ones with drive, ambition and ideas, the Group is in danger of stagnating.

4/2017 Treasurer's Report.

Copies of the accounts, which had once again been examined by Peter Bridge, were presented around the room and the Treasurer went through the major items. He said that subscriptions had held up well, up on the previous year, as was the income from coffee donations and visitor's fees. The grants received from the CWAAS and the Appleby Town Council specifically to pay for the post-excavation work on the Brackenber finds, the latter for the conservation of the collared urn rim, had been paid out in full. The HLF grant was clear and some of the grant had been paid to Wardell Armstrong for services to the project. These could also be seen on the reverse of the sheet, which also itemised other expenses incurred by the Project.

Apart from these, outgoings had been about the same as last year. The increase in Subscriptions would begin with renewals due this January and would provide a buffer against inevitably higher outgoings.

The Treasurer explained that there had been enquiries from some members regarding payment of subscriptions online and that the committee were intending to examine the possibility of payment by PayPal, BACS etc. In any event, the current system using cash or cheques would remain in place.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Chris Wilson, seconded by Carol Dougherty and approved by the meeting.

5/2017 Fieldwork Report

Martin Railton said that the post excavation work on the Brackenber Bronze Age burial was now complete, all reports from Wardell Armstrong had been received and his article for the CWAAS Transactions, the production of which had been a condition of the Grant, had been submitted. It was not clear if the article would be published this year or next due to space considerations.

The C14 dating had found that the remains of 4 adults and one child, with a possibility of bone from up to 40 adults, had been dated to the early Bronze Age, 1740 – 1620 BC. Oak and Hazel had been the predominant tree species at the time. One accessory vessel and the rim of the collared urn had been conserved and the Group still had to arrange display of the latter at the Appleby TIC prior to transfer to the Penrith Museum.

Martin went on to say that the Dig Appleby Project was about half way through and had consisted of 3 fieldwork weekends, an introductory geophysics day at St Anne's Hospital, the digging of 7 test pits around the town, as well as palaeography workshops, during which medieval documents had been transcribed, a visit to the Archives at Kendal and a finds day. The latter had identified

medieval pottery in some of the test pits. Martin said that he would be giving a full update after the AGM.

Project work in 2017 would start with further test pitting during the spring.

6/2017 Election of Officers and Committee members

The Chairman explained that in accordance with the constitution, she would be retiring at this AGM. She then asked the meeting if there were any nominations from the floor for the position of Chairman, since none had been received following distribution of the AGM Agenda. No other nominations were received and so she nominated Martin Joyce for the position. Richard Stevens seconded the nomination and following a vote, Martin Joyce was confirmed as the new Chairman of the Appleby Archaeology Group.

The chairman then went on to say that the other two officers were presenting themselves for re-election and asked for approval by the meeting. No other nominations being received, the re-election of Mike Godfrey and Richard Stevens was proposed by Carol Dougherty, seconded by Chris Wilson and approved by the meeting.

All other members of the committee offered themselves for re-election and in addition, Phyl Rouston offered to remain on the committee as an ordinary member. There were no other nominations from the floor and so the re-election of Heather Edwards, Carol Dougherty and Martin Railton and election of Phyl Rouston was proposed by Chris Wilson, seconded by Maureen Moore and approved by the meeting.

The Chairman said that she was pleased to say that she had been approached by two members regarding joining the committee later in 2017 and that they would be co-opted at the appropriate time.

7/2017 AOB

None

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

After the meeting the retiring Chairman was presented with a bouquet of flowers from the committee which she was delighted to accept. The presentation was made by Martin Railton, the founder of Appleby Archaeology, in recognition of her long commitment to the Group.

Richard Stevens 12th January 2017